

Story 2014 (1998 Dictated) Narrator: Turhan Baykan,
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Location: Isparta, Isparta
Province

Narrated at ATON

Date: April 4, 1998

Nasreddin Hoca's¹ Compartmentalized Stomach

One day Nasreddin Hoca was invited to a banquet given by a wealthy man in his village. There were all kinds of food served there, and there was enough of each kind so that every guest could have as much as he wanted.

Nasreddin Hoca was known to be a big eater, and he lived up to his reputation at this banquet. He ate and ate, filling and emptying his plate several times. He finally reached the point, however, where he had to decline the food passed to him. "I am sorry," he said, "but I cannot eat any more. I am full.

One of the guests near him said, "Ah, that is

¹A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a Muslim community. In pre-Republican days he was also a teacher, for then education was the responsibility of the clergy. Although now teachers have secular training, they (as well as professors) are sometimes still referred to sentimentally as hoca, Nasreddin Hoca is Turkey's most beloved comic folk character. Stories about him are legion.

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too bad Hoca, for they are just about ready to serve the baklava."²

"Well, that is all right, as far as I am concerned," said Nasreddin Hoca. "I always reserve a special place in my stomach for nothing but baklava."

²Perhaps Turkey's most popular dessert, baklava is a very sweet pastry. It is made up of many layers of extremely thin dough. After the dough has been baked, honey is poured into the bottom of the baking dish. This honey is drawn upward and spread throughout the confection by means of wicking action.